

# A Beautiful Day

**Target Level:**

Grade 2

**SOLs:**

*Science:* 2.1, 2.8

*English:* 2.2, 2.3, 2.8

**Materials Needed:**

Art supplies

Optional: relaxing tape  
of forest or stream  
environment sounds

**Time Needed:**

One class period

Optional: lunch period

**Summary**

Students will listen to a story and illustrate what they have experienced through guided imagery.

**Objectives**

Students will be able to recognize some of the intrinsic values of litter-free woods and streams.

**Background**

This activity is designed to assist students in visualizing the differences in an area when it is clean and when it is littered. The instructional technique of visualization, or guided imagery, allows students to conjure in their minds the images you are suggesting. The concept of interdependence of living and nonliving things are introduced and explored, and conclusions are drawn based on the students' experienced observations and feelings regarding those images. This activity could be combined with a field trip to a local park or a picnic outside on the school grounds.

**Preparation**

If planning to take the students outside for a lunch and cleanup activity after this exercise, remind the students to bring a bag lunch or snack ahead of time.

**Procedure**

1. Tell the students they are going to take a trip in their minds and will need to use their imaginations. Have them sit or lie comfortably and close their eyes. They should listen carefully and picture what you are saying as you take them on a picnic at the edge of a stream.

2. Read the following short story:

You and your classmates are sitting in the shade of some trees next to a stream. You are talking with your friends and enjoying some of your favorite foods. Now the meal is over. You and your friends carefully place your garbage<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>cups<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>glass<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>plastic bags<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>paper<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>back in your lunch bags. You want to leave this place as clean and neat as it was when you arrived here.

Now you are heading out for a short nature hike. You are walking along the bubbling stream. You hear the water rushing over the rocks, swirling around, and lapping gently against the little sandbar nearby. The sun is warm on your back. The wind is blowing softly on your face. You see ferns and grasses growing along the stream banks. The leaves on the trees are moving gently. You see a raccoon's tracks on the bank and stop to look at them. You hear the call of a bird and wonder if it is letting its friends know that you and your friends are coming close by.

As you and your friends continue to walk along, you begin to notice other things too. You see some old soda cans and broken bottles. And there are cigarette butts laying all around. There is a torn garbage bag and its trash is spilling out. In the bushes you see an old tire. It is almost hidden with grass and briars growing around and through it. There are old oil cans too. They seem to have been just thrown there. You continue to see pieces of cardboard and paper and plastic wrappers. One of your friends points out a large bird standing in the water ahead. It is a heron. Its large wings flap and lift it away. You are still thinking about all the litter you keep seeing. You feel sad and wish that it wasn't there.

One of your group leaders says it is time to head back and hands you a trash bag. You and your friends make a game out of picking up the litter you see. You stuff papers into the bag and plastic bottles. Your leader says to let her pick up the broken glass and she puts on her heavy work gloves and puts the pieces in her bag. As you walk, you continue to put pieces of litter in your bag. The bag is getting heavy and one of your friends takes it for a while. Someone tells you to look up and see a cloud that looks like a beetle. You see a cloud in the shape of a rabbit too. You pick up more litter. Your leader says you are helping to make this area a safer place for the animals that live in the stream and along the bank. You know you are helping to make the trail a more beautiful place to visit too. You are soon back to your picnic area. That was a fun hike!

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3. Have the students slowly open their eyes. They should stay quiet for a few minutes and think about their picnic and hike. Tell them to remember the things that made them smile.

4. Ask students how they “felt” when they were (walking, talking, and picking up litter) on the way back from their imagined hike? Generate additional discussion with the following questions:

Why is broken glass dangerous? Note: Be sure to emphasize the need for precautions (e.g., heavy gloves, broom and dustpan, etc.) around broken glass, anything that looks like medical equipment, or any other items one may not be familiar with. Explain that it is always best to have an adult pick up these kinds of items because they will know more about what specific precautions may be needed.

- . Who usually cleans a park?
- . What might happen if nobody cleaned the park?
- . Have you been to parks that are clean? Ones that are dirty?

### Wrap Up/Assessment

1. Have the students verbally generate a list of words describing a park that is clean, and then a second list describing a park that is dirty.

2. Remind the students about their imagined picnic and hike. Each student should draw a picture of what they remember that made them smile.

### Extension

Take the students outside for a picnic lunch and clean up afterward.

*This activity was adapted from Marine Debris Teaching Activities available from the Center for Marine Education.*